



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Leura G. Canary  
Middle District of Alabama

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## **FOUR INDICTED IN FRAUDULENT CAR TITLING SCHEME**

**MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**— Montgomery residents, Rokenbert Calvin Martin, Audrey Princetta Martin, and Chavonne Monique McLeod, all 29 years old, along with Hayneville resident, Shirley McDonald Shabazz, 50, were arrested this morning pursuant to a federal indictment, U. S. Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today. The four are principally accused of conspiring to commit what is commonly referred to as “mail fraud” – that is, obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises through the use of the mail, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341..

According to the 19-count indictment, from 2007 to 2010, Rokenbert Martin committed numerous crimes involving at least eleven motor vehicles, including a BMW, two Cadillac Escalades, three Chevrolet Corvettes, and a Lexus, most of which were stolen. The indictment accuses Martin of falsifying vehicle title applications, submitting fraudulent insurance claims, and knowingly possessing stolen motor vehicles, some of which he later allegedly sold to innocent buyers. Martin is also charged with unlawfully removing a motor vehicle identification number (or VIN), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 511.

**Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government’s burden to prove the defendant’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.**

In order to accomplish his crimes, Martin was allegedly assisted by Shabazz, a tag clerk with the Office of the Lowndes County, Alabama, Tax Assessor, who is charged with knowingly submitting false title applications on Martin's behalf, sometimes supplying the false information and even signing the names of other people to official documents without their knowledge or permission. For this conduct, Martin and Shabazz are both charged with five counts of mail fraud and five counts of aggravated identity theft.

Audrey Martin and McLeod are also named in the indictment as co-conspirators. McLeod is accused of renting a 2009 Cadillac Escalade in Miami, Florida, and then bringing it back to Montgomery, where she had it titled and insured in her name. Even though McLeod is a Montgomery resident, her title application – which allegedly contained a fraudulent bill of sale, false addresses, and a false VIN – was allegedly processed in Lowndes County by Shabazz. The indictment further alleges that, shortly after she had the Escalade insured, McLeod falsely reported it stolen and received over \$50,000 from her insurance carrier – proceeds that were allegedly used by Rokenbert Martin to purchase a 2005 Dodge Viper.

Audrey Martin is accused of conspiring with her husband, Rokenbert Martin, to have a stolen 2008 Chevrolet Corvette falsely titled and insured in her name. Once again, the indictment accuses Shabazz of knowingly processing the false title application in Lowndes County. According to the indictment, on July 8, 2010, the Martins falsely reported the Corvette stolen from them while they were vacationing in Atlanta, Georgia, when in fact the Corvette had been seized from a storage unit and impounded by the Montgomery Police Department nearly two months earlier.

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Earlier this afternoon, all four defendants were arraigned by the Honorable Wallace Capel, Jr., United States Magistrate Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, and entered pleas of not guilty. They were each released on a \$25,000 bond pending trial, which is currently set for December 5, 2011.

The crimes of mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail fraud are both punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. A conviction for aggravated identity theft carries a mandatory two-year prison term, which must be served consecutively to any other prison term imposed. If convicted, the four defendants also face a possible term of supervised release and could be ordered to pay restitution to the victims of their offenses.

The indictment and arrests come as a result of an investigation initiated in April 2010 by the Montgomery Police Department, working in cooperation with agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Nathan D. Stump will prosecute the case.

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